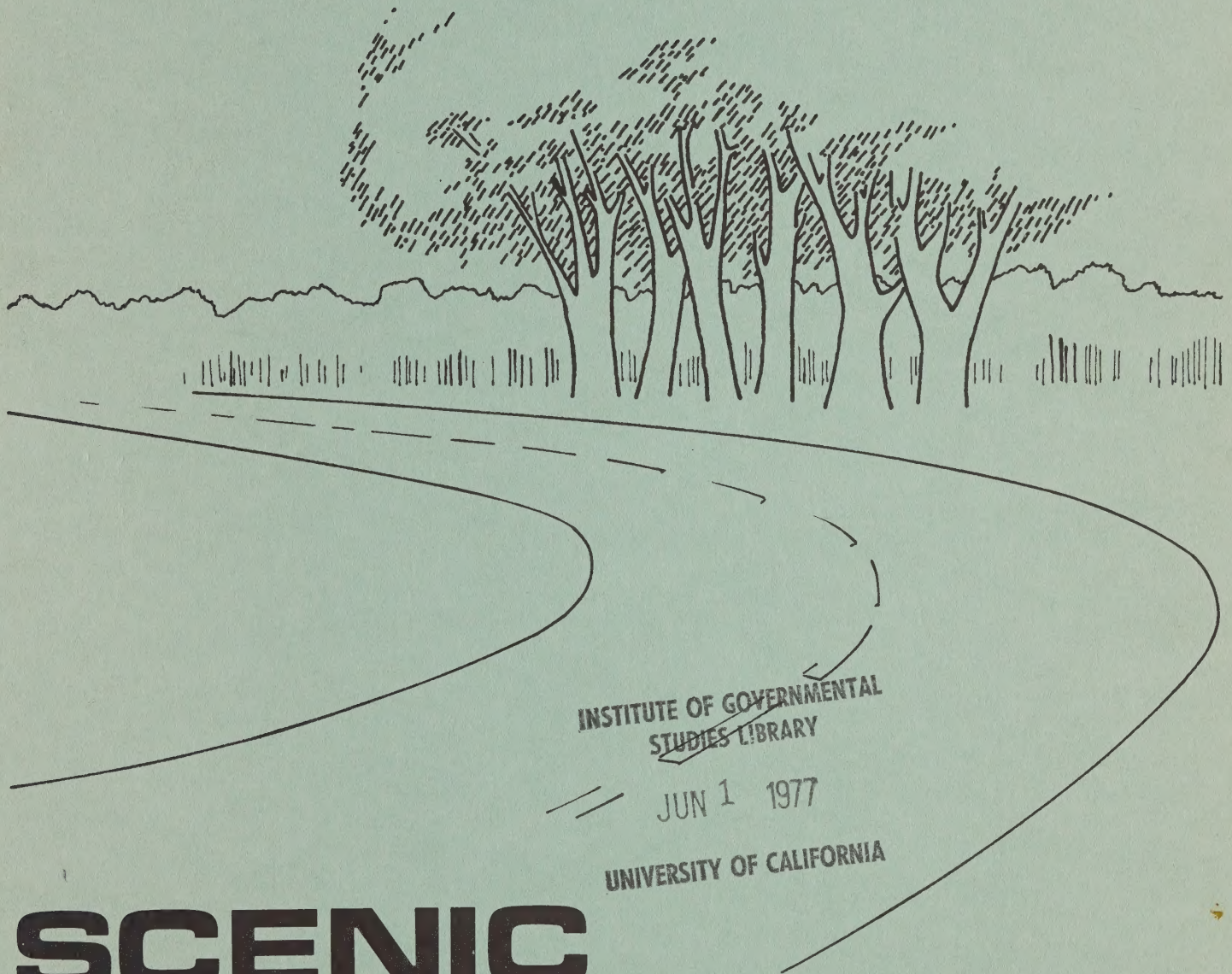


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A PROJECT FOR THE CITIES OF  
CORCORAN, HANFORD, LEMOORE  
AND THE COUNTY OF KINGS



# SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT





## SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

A Project for the Cities of Corcoran, Hanford  
Lemoore, and the County of Kings Conducted by  
the [Kings County Regional Planning Agency]

Prepared by

[QUAD CONSULTANTS

Highways Kings Co.  
County Pl. " " "

March 1975

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As stated in the *Kings County Environmental Resources Management Element*, the scenic resources of Kings County are not those of overwhelming, spectacular waterfalls and giant redwoods, rather they have a beauty of subtle contrast with occasional accents.

The County reflects the distinctive features of the climate, topography, biota, land use, and lifestyle of the central portion of the San Joaquin Valley. Most of the landscape is dominated by cultivated land, such as fruit and nut orchards, vineyards, pastures, and above all the great expanses of field crops including cotton, wheat, barley, corn, alfalfa, and safflower. Interspersed among these agricultural activities are natural accents such as rivers, mountains and man-made features including rural communities, parks and other open spaces. Thus the scenic resources of Kings County range from the natural beauty of the meandering serenity of the Kings River and the interesting formations of the Kreyenhagen Hills to those environments created by man which are a vital part of his heritage and continued existence. The importance of preserving and protecting these resources is of overriding significance to this Element. Benefits and values derived from the scenic resources of the region are normally not realized until those resources are endangered or lost.

The basis for preparation of this Element is Section 65302 (h) of the California Government Code which requires a scenic highway element of all city and county general plans, stated as follows:

"The plan shall include a 'scenic highways element' for the development, establishment, and protection of scenic highways pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the *Streets and Highways Code*".

Article 2.5, Chapter 2, Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code describes those State highways eligible for designation as official State scenic highways and the procedure required to obtain such designation. The procedure and its relationship to the Kings County region are discussed in detail in Chapter III of this Element.

The Kings County Regional Planning Agency (KCRPA) has been directed by its member agencies to prepare, on their behalf, a scenic highways element which complies with the legislative requirement. The member agencies of KCRPA consist of all the general purpose governments in Kings County and are the cities of Corcoran, Hanford, Lemoore and the County of Kings. Their collective jurisdictions are referred to throughout this Element as the "region" or the "Kings County region". The two terms do not include any other governments or agencies.

This Element has been developed as an integral part of the KCRPA comprehensive general plan program. Since the success of the scenic system program is so intimately related to the maintenance and improvement of the regional circulation system, this Element is included as part of the Kings County Regional

Transportation Plan. The integration of these two elements is hoped to maximize consideration of the impacts of road construction and related improvements on the scenic resources of the region, in addition to providing standards and policies which mitigate such impacts.

This Element provides direct or visual access to the scenic, recreational or historic resources of the region through a compatible blending of the circulation system and the various natural and man-made features of the landscape. Community entrances are also examined to identify improvements which can enhance the aesthetic character of the region and also provide meaningful services to travelers passing through the communities. In this respect, to better serve the citizens of the region, this Element takes a broader scope than the State legislative requirements.



## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The function of "goals" in the planning process is to translate the values and desires of society into a direction which will solve or prevent a problem. Goals are generally held to be an ideal, hence they are usually unattainable or do not represent an achievable end. On the other hand, "objectives" can be both achieved and measured. Thus, within the constraints of these definitions, the following goals and objectives are proposed to identify the parameters and expected achievements of this Element:

### Goal

*It is the fundamental goal of the Scenic Highways Element to create a system of scenic routes and community entrances which serve to preserve, protect, enhance and provide access to the recreational, historical and aesthetic resources of the region.*

### Related Objectives

1. Establish and implement a Scenic System Program.
2. Protect and enhance scenic resources within designated scenic corridors.
3. Designate and maintain rural scenic highways to provide compatible use among various transportation modes and to provide access to recreational, historic and scenic resources.
4. Designate and maintain urban entrances and parkways to provide compatible use among various transportation modes and to provide access to urban resources, including traveler's needs, sites of cultural or historic significance and open spaces.
5. Coordinate road improvement standards to scenic values.
6. Establish scenic corridors on recommended scenic routes.
7. Coordinate corridors with adjacent jurisdictions on boundary routes.

### Goal

*Preserve and enhance the scenic resources of the region.*

### Related Objectives

1. Coordinate the implementation of the Scenic System Program with the implementation of related general plan elements, including the regional transportation plan, the environmental resources management element of the County, and the open space plans of the cities.

2. Maintain and enforce the standards and protective measures recommended by this general plan element and those elements identified in the preceding objective.
3. Obtain support for the Scenic System Program from other interested agencies and groups such as the California Department of Transportation, Chambers of Commerce, public service and environmental interest organizations, and any other organizations, groups, or individuals interested in the Program.

#### Goal

*Safeguard the economic resources of the region.*

#### Related Objectives

1. Maintain corridor definition flexibility in urban and rural areas in a manner which will protect and enhance public and private investment in open space, roadways, and structures.
2. Implement standards and policies in the Scenic System Program within and adjacent to scenic corridors to deter blight, safeguard property values and encourage high quality development.



### III. SCENIC SYSTEM

The scenic system proposed for the region is intended to combine those routes eligible for official State designation with those routes of local scenic significance to create a coordinated and unified network. The degree to which this program is implemented is a decision of the elected officials of the four local governments in the region. The recommendations which follow will describe a maximum scenic system for the region in light of existing conditions and programs.

Many events can and will take place to cause changes to the proposed system. For example, the current energy crisis may not be merely a crisis but a long-term limitation, which will drastically change our means of travel and our desire to travel. The "Sunday drive" which provides a means of maintaining a visual familiarity of the community and the surrounding countryside may be an activity only to be remembered. Private transportation conveyances such as automobiles may become more difficult to purchase and maintain. More energy-efficient travel modes like public transit or low energy consumption vehicles such as bicycles may take their place.

Although some of these changes can and must be anticipated, the level of response must be balanced by the realities of fiscal limitations and demands for other public services. For these reasons, a phased development of the proposed scenic routes is recommended. As the recreational plans of the region are carried out, as historical preservation projects are completed or as an area develops, consideration can be given to providing the related segment of the scenic system.

The scenic system categories which follow have been selected to properly identify the facility involved, its relationship to the scenic resources of the region, and the responsibilities of the agencies liable for the facility. State highways and County roads eligible for official State designation as scenic highways are identified. County roads and city streets which are not eligible for State designation but locally important as scenic routes are also identified. And, finally, those points of access to various communities in the region, which are critical in terms of conveying an "image", are identified and evaluated. Subsequent chapters of this Element will establish measures and standards which can protect, maintain and enhance the scenic system.

#### A. OFFICIAL STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS

In 1961 the State legislature initiated a study to analyze the feasibility of creating a Statewide system of scenic highways with recommendations for procedures and standards that could be adopted to locate, designate, plan for and design such highways. The study was to be developed as a joint effort by the State Office of Planning and the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Water Resources, and Conservation.



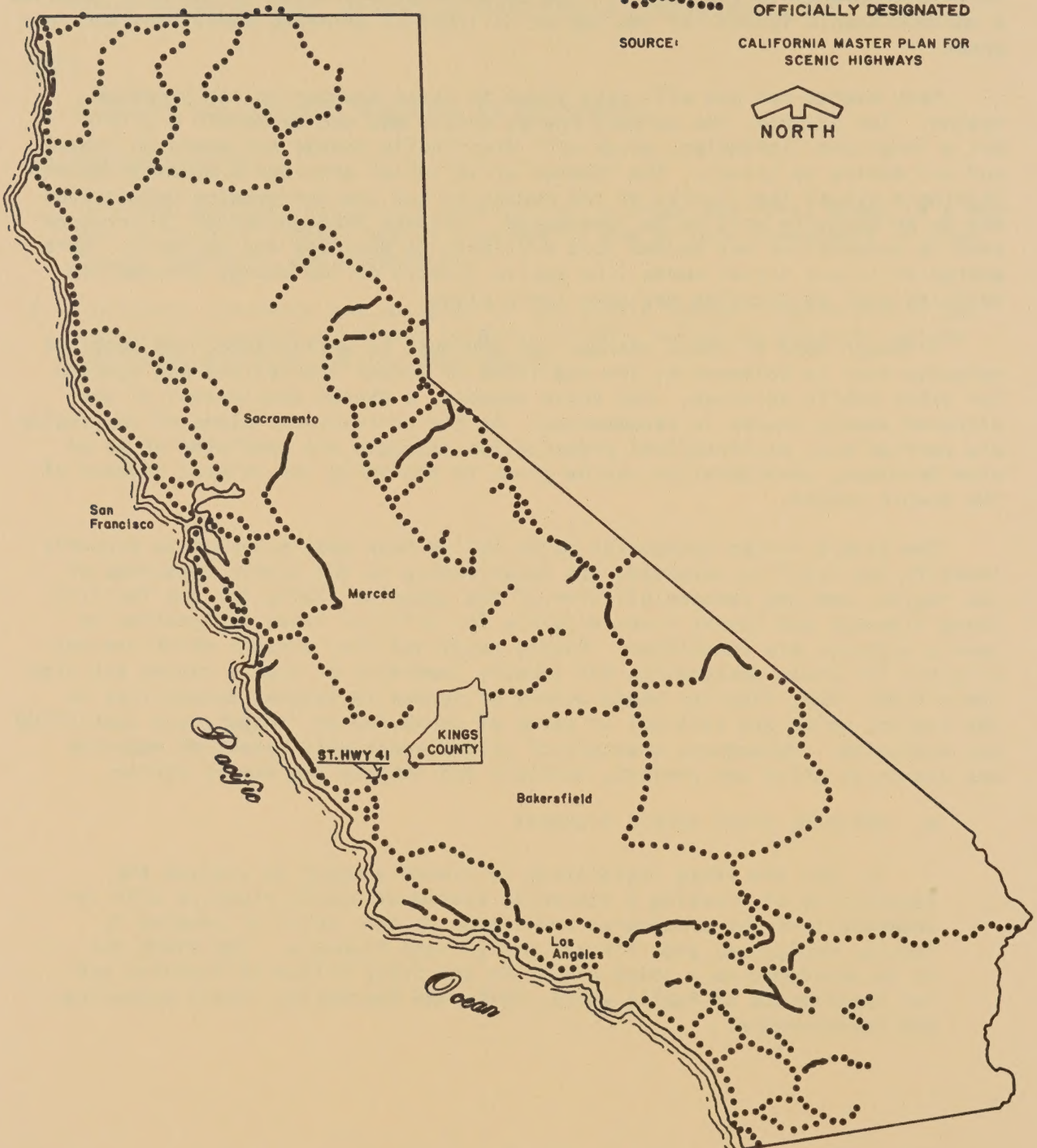
Plate 1  
State Scenic Highway System

Legend

 OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED  
PORTION

 IN MASTER PLAN - NOT  
OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR  
SCENIC HIGHWAYS





The coordinating organization created by these agencies for the purpose of completing the study was later designated as the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Scenic Highways. Progress on the study was expanded in 1962 by additional legislation which created a nine-member Scenic Highways Citizen's Advisory Committee to advise and assist the Interdepartmental Committee.

The joint efforts of these two committees, coupled with widespread input from local officials and various other interested groups and individuals produced in March of 1963 a *Plan for Scenic Highways in California*. The plan recommended that the Legislature formally designate approximately 4,900 miles of State highway routes as scenic highways. It also identified responsibilities and programs for implementing the plan on a statewide basis. The Legislature responded to the plan through passage of Senate Bills 1467 and 1468 which established a State scenic highways system as shown on Plate 1, and created a permanent Advisory Committee on a Master Plan for Scenic Highways to oversee and give advice on the development of the system. Furthermore, the State Department of Public Works was designated as the agency to create and apply standards and procedures for development of the system. The entire process is known as the State Scenic Highway Law and is contained in Sections 220 to 223 and 260 to 263 of the State Streets and Highways Code.

The only route in Kings County recommended in the State Master Plan as eligible for designation as an "Official State Scenic Highway" is that portion of State Highway 41 commencing at its intersection with State Highway 33 and proceeding to the western County line. As indicated on Plate 1, the proposed scenic route on Highway 41 extends through Kern County and into San Luis Obispo County to its intersection with State Highway 46 near Cholame. Only those routes identified in the Master Plan qualify for designation as an "Official" scenic route. Thus no other State highways passing through Kings County are presently eligible for designation.

#### B. COUNTY SCENIC HIGHWAYS

Highways, portions of highways or County roads not contained in the State Master Plan for Scenic Highways but considered by a local jurisdiction as worthy of designation as a scenic highway can be officially designated by the State as a County Scenic Highway. All procedures and standards which apply to the State scenic highway program must also apply to county scenic highways in order for them to qualify for official State designation.

The studies and analyses required and normally conducted by the State for State scenic highways must be developed by the local jurisdiction for County scenic highways. Although this program does, therefore, place an additional burden on a local jurisdiction, it also offers a worthwhile alternative for the preservation and maintenance of those scenic amenities recognized as valuable local resources. In addition, it provides a means for applying uniform standards consistent with statewide programs to protect established scenic corridors, and opportunities for substantiating an amendment to the State Master Plan to include a particular highway or county road.



A county scenic highway system in Kings County can form an integral link to the trails and recreation system proposed by the County, permit the preservation of scenic vistas, and provide access to points of historical interest. Plate 2 shows the proposed trails and recreation system and the points of historical interest in the County. Plate 3 indicates those State highways and county roads which are recommended to be the County scenic highways system. Only State highways are recommended for official State designation. The extent to which the system can or should be developed is, of course, a matter largely determined by the Kings County Board of Supervisors, hopefully in cooperation with other jurisdictions and groups which are affected by the system.

### State Highways

Route 33: State Highway 33 is a generally northwest to southeast link in the State highway system running from State Highway 152, intersecting in the Dos Palos area, to State Highway 166, intersecting in the Taft area and continuing on to the coast into the City of Ventura. That portion between Highways 152 and 166 primarily serves the intraregional and interregional transportation needs of the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The completion of Interstate Highway 5, which parallels much of Highway 33, has greatly diminished the interregional movement function Highway 33 has performed in the past.

The segment of Highway 33 in Kings County is located in the southwestern portion of the County running from the south County line through the western fringes of the community of Avenal on to the western County line. The segment recommended for inclusion in the County scenic highways system is from its intersection with Highway 41 to the western County line, as shown on Plate 3. An excellent vista of the Chalk-Buttes/Reef Ridge portion of the Kreyenhagen Hills is afforded from this portion of Highway 33. The route is generally free of billboards, roadside development and other factors which would detract from the route's scenic attributes. The Kreyenhagen Hills is identified in the Phase I Kings County Environmental Resources Management Element as a scenic resource. Furthermore this portion of Highway 33 provides major access to Avenal, which is discussed in the Community Entrance section of this Element.



# LEGEND

## △ PARKS:

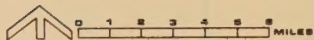
1. Burris
2. Dutch John Weir\*
3. Last Chance Weir\*
4. Laton-Kingston Park
5. Lemoore Weir\*
6. Island Weir\*
7. Crescent Weir\*
8. Hickey Park
9. Empire Weir #1\*
10. Empire Weir #2\*
11. Kettleman City Aquatic Recreation Area\*

## ○ PROPOSED HISTORIC SITES:

1. Kings River Cemetery
2. Kings River Church
3. Palm Trees (Robinson and Raulins)
4. Rhodes Cemetery
5. Lake School Cemetery
6. Heinlein Ranch Blacksmith Shop
7. Murphey's Ferry
8. Santa Rosa Rancheria
9. Kettleman Hills Discovery Well Elliot No. 1
10. Avenal Ranch

\* Proposed

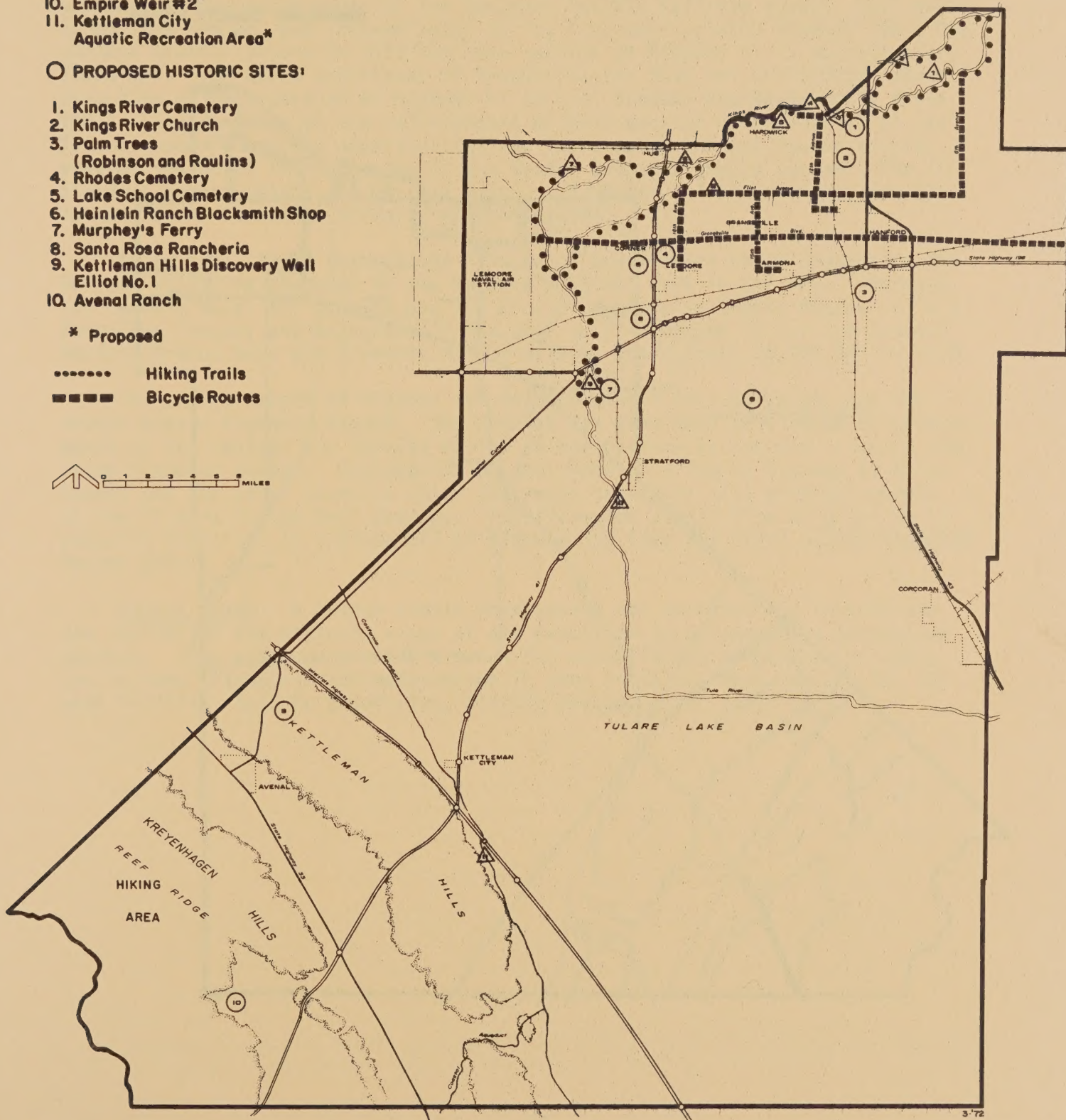
- ..... Hiking Trails  
 ■■■■■ Bicycle Routes



## Plate 2 Kings County

## Proposed Recreation Areas & Points of Historical Interest

SOURCE: Kings County Environmental Resources Management Element, Phase I



# Kings County

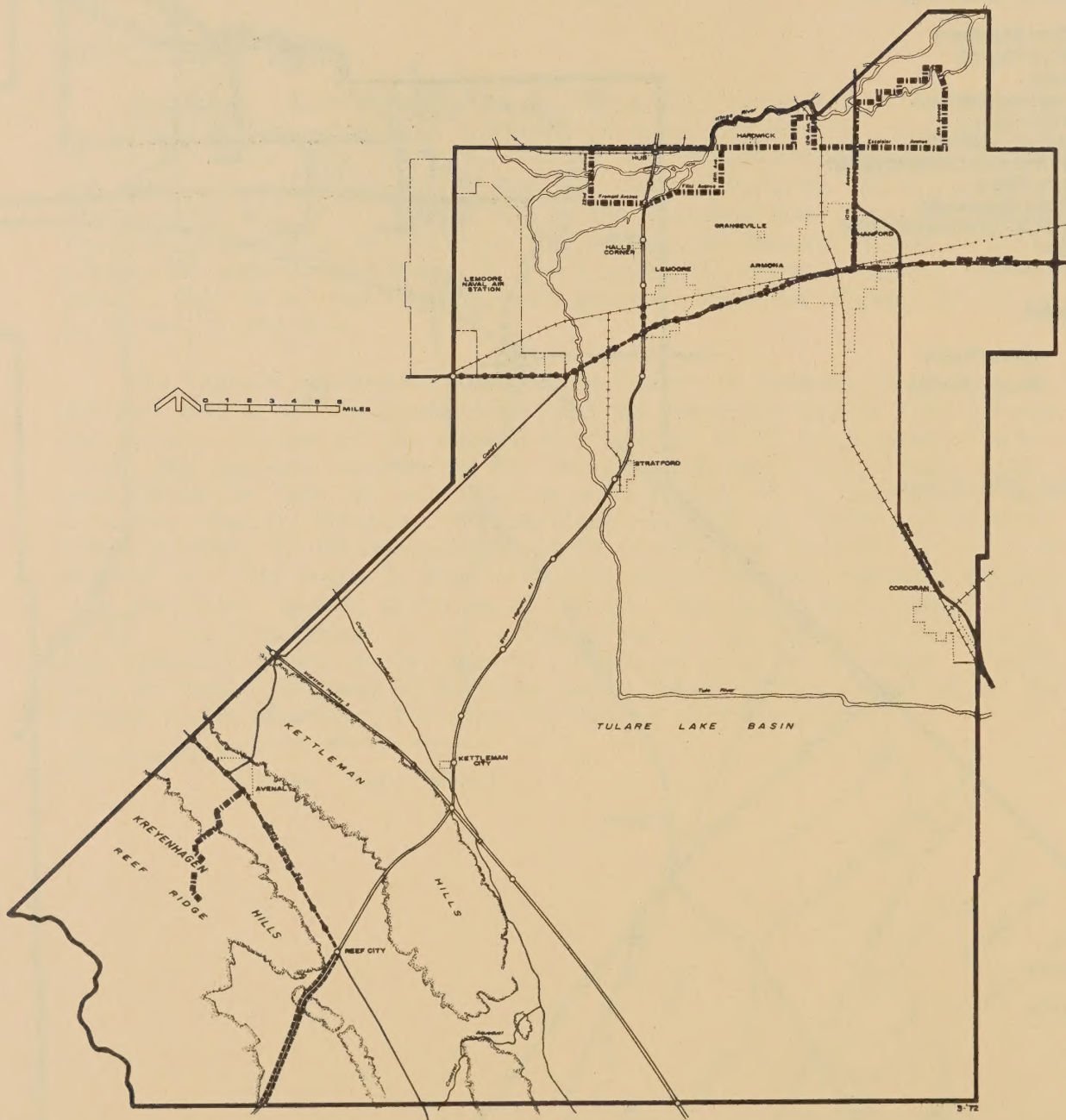
## OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATED ROUTES

===== STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS

●-●-●-●-● COUNTY SCENIC HIGHWAYS

## LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

■■■■■ COUNTY ROADS





Route 41: State Highway 41 runs in a generally northeast to southwest direction through the County providing access to the communities of Stratford, Kettleman City and Lemoore. Highway 41, in conjunction with Highway 46, provides major access from the central San Joaquin Valley to the central coastal area of California.

The section of Highway 41 recommended for inclusion into the County scenic highways system would begin at the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, just north of Houston Avenue, and proceed south to its intersection with Highway 198. The current traffic volume on this two-lane section of Highway 41 is approximately 5,600 ADT. The State Department of Transportation does not anticipate reconstruction of this section of Highway 41 to full freeway standards until after 1982. Consideration of the relationship of this section of Highway 41 to the City of Lemoore and the opportunities for improvement through reconstruction provide the basis for inclusion in the County scenic highways system. The individual access points off of this section of Highway 41 into Lemoore are discussed in the Community Entrance of this element.

Route 198: State Highway 198 is a major cross-state route connecting the Salinas Valley in the west to the Sequoia National Park in the east. Between the Lemoore Naval Air Station and the City of Hanford at Eighth Avenue it is a four-lane freeway and expressway. The peak traffic volume is carried between Hanford-Armona Road and Eleventh Avenue with an approximate 10,000 ADT in 1973.

The entire length of Highway 198 is recommended for inclusion into the county scenic highways system. The highway has long been considered by governments in the central San Joaquin Valley as the "Sierra to the Sea" link in the State highways system. Designation of the route as a scenic highway by Kings County and the other counties which the route traverses will provide support to the "Sierra to the Sea" concept. Consideration should also be given to requesting the State to include all of Highway 198 into the State scenic highways master plan.

County Roads: A County scenic road system can successfully interrelate the recreation and historic areas of the County to its predominate population centers. They also can provide a means for establishing compatibility among the various transportation modes which in some instances must compete for the same facility, such as pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic.



Roads listed below for inclusion into the County scenic highways system were selected on the basis of their existing aesthetic qualities and the relationship they bear to the concentration of population in the north County area and a similar concentration of recreational and historic sites:

- a. Clinton Ave., between 6½ Ave. and 7th Ave.
- b. Corona Ave., between 7th Ave. and 8th Ave.
- c. Cairo Ave., between 8th Ave. and 9th Ave.
- d. Denver Ave., between 9th Ave. and 10th Ave.
- e. Douglas Ave., between 12th Ave. and 13¼ Ave.
- f. Excelsior Ave., between 6th Ave. and 12th Ave., and between 13¼ Ave. and 22nd Ave.
- g. Flint Ave., between 16th Ave. and State Highway 41
- h. Fremont Ave., between State Highway 41 and 22nd Ave.
- i. Tar Canyon Road, from Highway 33 west to end of road
- j. 6th Ave., between Excelsior Ave. and Cairo Ave.
- k. 6½ Ave., between Cairo Ave. and Clinton Ave.
- l. 7th Ave., between Corona Ave. and Clinton Ave.
- m. 8th Ave., between Cairo Ave. and Corona Ave.
- n. 10th Ave., (Hwy 43), between Denver Ave. and Flint Ave.
- o. 12th Ave., between Excelsior Ave. and Douglas Ave.
- p. 13¼ Ave., between Excelsior Ave. and Douglas Ave.
- q. 16th Ave., between Flint Ave. and Excelsior Ave.
- r. 22nd Ave., between Flint Ave. and Excelsior Ave.

The above roads are not recommended to be submitted to the official State designation process. Rather, they are recommended to be a part of the "unofficial" County scenic system to be analyzed and improved in accordance with the procedures described in Chapter IV of the Element. It should be noted, however, that the above system does not conform to the bicycle routes as identified in the *Kings County Regional Transportation Plan* or the *Phase I Kings County Environmental Resources Management Element*. Additional study should be conducted as part of the Transportation Plan revision to resolve these conflicts.

#### C. COMMUNITY ENTRANCES AND SCENIC ROUTES

The concept of visually attractive community entrances has been identified as an important program to be considered within the Scenic Highways Element. As the first objective indicator of the overall visual quality of a town or city, the visual quality of a major entrance route is a significant influence on the first impressions of the community developed by visitors and tourists, as well as being a potentially important means of attracting visitors to the community. For the purposes of this study, community entrances are considered as being the point where the majority of travelers leave state highways and major county roads to enter the various communities.

Historically, communities have placed more relative emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of their central areas than their boundaries. That condition existed more as a result of constantly-changing city limits lines in the times when urban sprawl was not recognized as a major contributor to environmental deterioration, than it was a result of any particular apathy regarding the character of the community entrance. Nevertheless, the importance of the community entrance has received general recognition only recently.



The existence of a major entrance or entrances provides a community with an opportunity to make a carefully considered initial statement to all visitors -- in effect, "This is what our town is like". Communities have the ability to decide upon the character of their entrances just as they may regulate the character of development within their interiors. While it must be recognized that a community entrance with an improved appearance will not solve other municipal visual problems, the community which chooses to develop an attractively landscaped entrance in conjunction with other land use controls, rather than leaving the visual character of the entrance to chance, takes a positive step toward enhancing the environmental quality of the entire community.

The development of scenic routes within a community continues the image established by community entrances to create a scenic circulation network which can give visual emphasis and direction to the various day to day functions of a community. The criteria for establishing scenic routes within the communities of the region is based on the open space and aesthetic potential along existing street networks. These criteria include relationship to community entrances; access to major community land use functions, particularly open space or scenic resource areas; general plan policies; and sufficient right-of-way to accommodate landscaping. The locations of proposed bicycle paths serving intra-community needs are acknowledged, although they are not given primary consideration, because, with few exceptions, they are proposed to be located on minor streets to economically minimize conflicts with vehicular traffic. The additional imposition of scenic routes on these streets would require right-of-way in excess of the street's function or increase the potential for bicycle/vehicular conflicts. It should be stressed, however, that where bicycle paths are located on major streets, scenic route design elements such as landscaping can be effectively used to separate and buffer bicycle/vehicular interaction.

The subsequent sections of this Chapter detail community scenic routes and community entrance conditions problems and potentials for those communities in the region with populations greater than 1,000. The particular locations listed are suggested as those which new or further development would result in the greatest benefit to the community.

#### Armona

State Highway 198 traverses the southern portion of the unincorporated community of Armona. The primary points of access to the community from that route are Hanford-Armona Road and 14th Avenue. From the east, Hanford-Armona Road enters Armona through an industrial area with several modern facilities located along that route, interspersed with several parcels still in agricultural use. The major entrance to Armona is 14th Avenue at Highway 198. There the freeway off-ramps provide an abrupt transition between the rural countryside and the center of town, which is a short distance to the north. The situation is very unlike the Hanford-Armona Road entrance, where the rural-urban transition is gradual. Nevertheless, both locations would be appropriate for entrance treatments of a somewhat larger scale than the wooden "Welcome" sign which exists on 14th Avenue.

#### Avena

Located in the northern portion of the Kettleman plain between the Kettle-

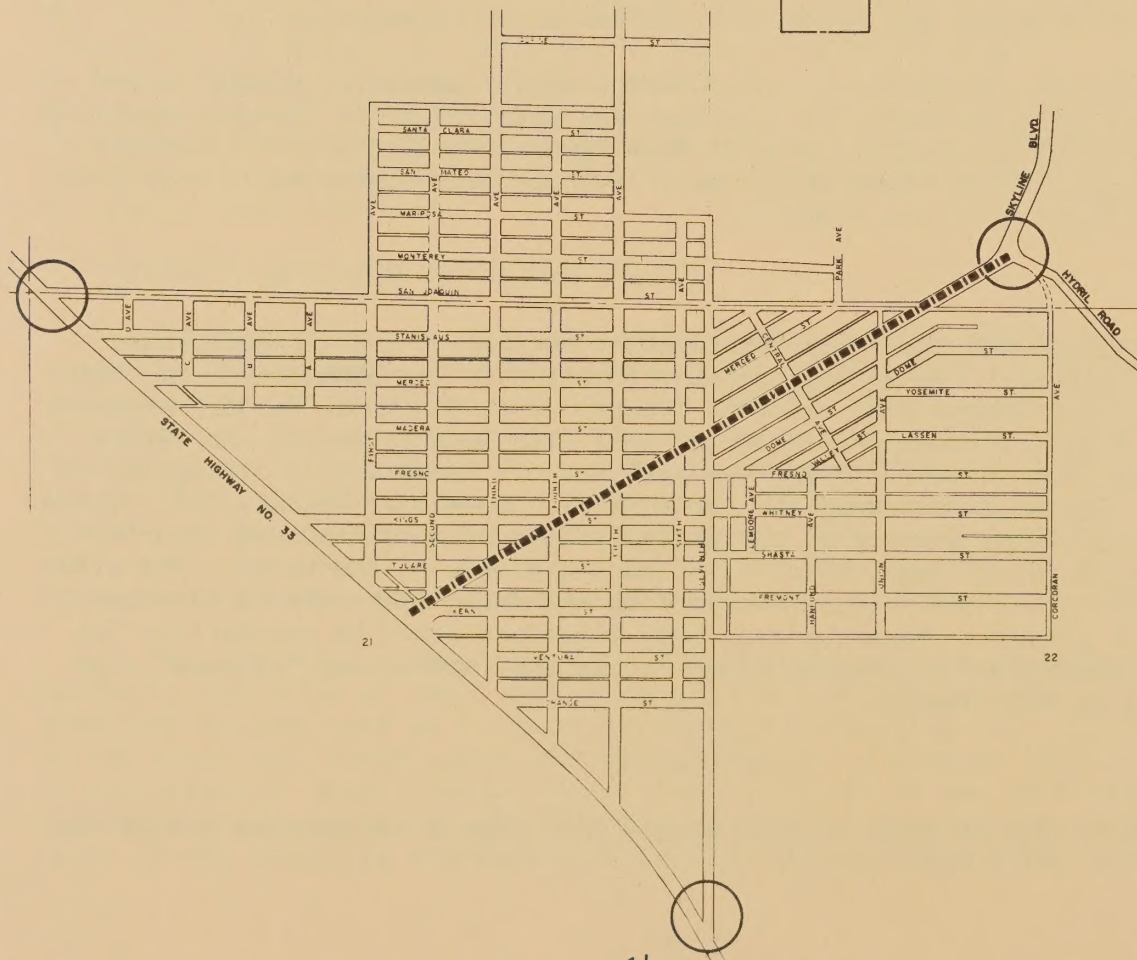
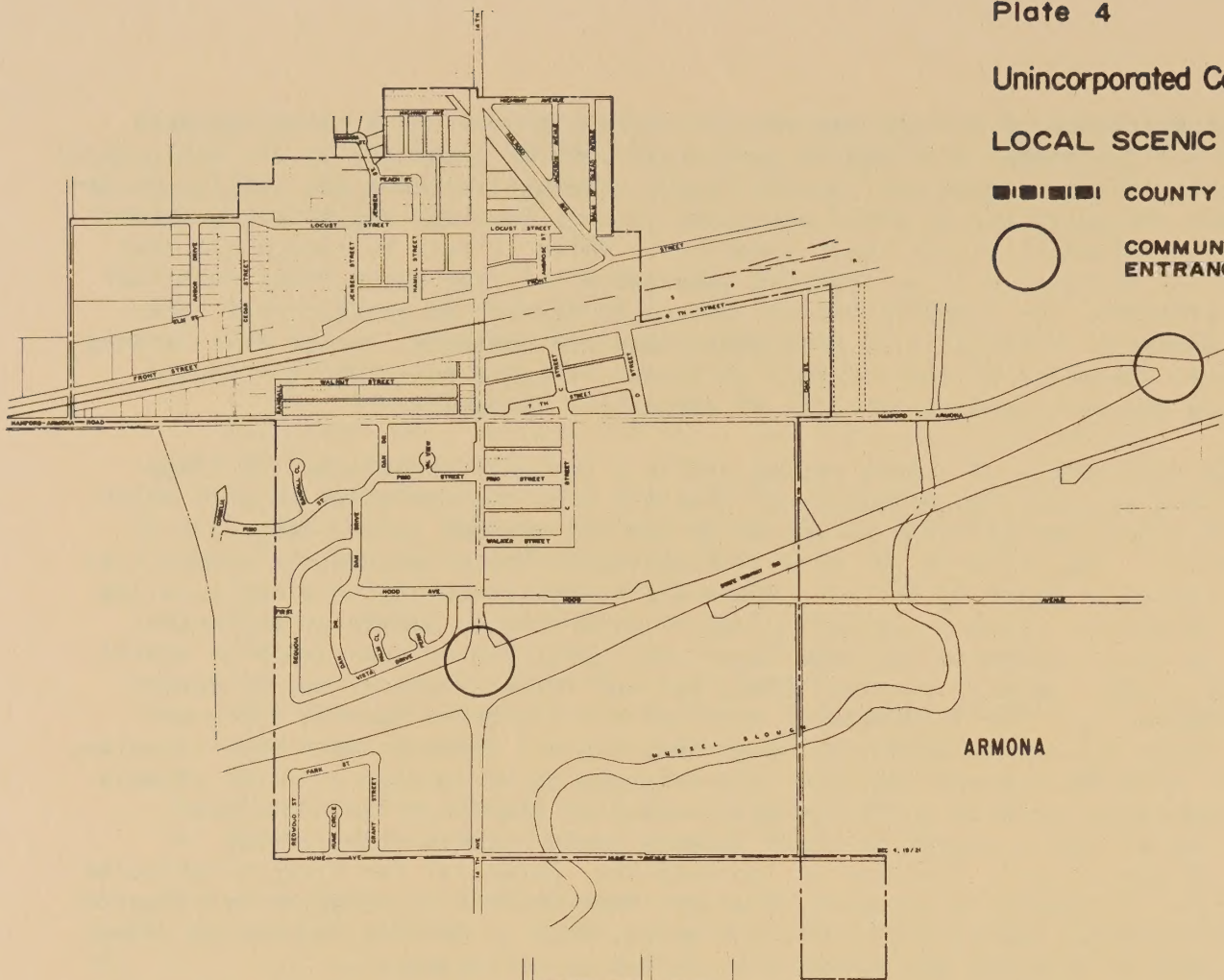


Unincorporated Communities

LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

COUNTY ROADS

COMMUNITY ENTRANCES





man Hills and the Kreyenhagen Hills, Avenal is bounded on the west by State Highway 33, which creates two entrance points currently developed with signing. Highway 269, (Skyline Road) crosses the Kettleman Hills from the San Joaquin Valley and enters Avenal as its eastern edge. The entrances on 33 and 269 are very different in character. On 33, the town is constantly visible for several miles before it is reached, while on Skyline Road, which essentially follows a gully down from the crest of the Kettleman Hills, Avenal does not become visible until a few hundred feet prior to entry. Like Route 33, the Skyline Road entrance to Avenal has an identification sign installed by the Avenal Chamber of Commerce. Landscaping would be effective in all three locations.

Skyline Boulevard is the "main street" of Avenal, providing support for most of its commercial activities and providing central access to all parts of the community. Extensive landscaping could be included as part of a program to upgrade the condition of the road, thus supporting the efforts of the citizens of the community to "clean up" Avenal and upgrade the appearance of the businesses. For these reasons, Skyline Boulevard between Route 33 and its intersection with Hydril Road is recommended as a community scenic route.

### Corcoran

As a result of its location along the west side of State Highway 43 and the low population densities in the unincorporated County areas to the west and south, the City of Corcoran has major community entrances at two locations only. The northern entrance occurs where Highway 43 bears east at Santa Fe Road with Santa Fe being the actual access route. The eastern entrance (which also serves traffic from the south) is at the intersection of Highway 43 and Whitley Avenue. Both locations are presently developed with attractive entrance structures, landscaping and informational signing. It should be noted, however, that a problem of visual background exists with the northern entrance to Corcoran. The property immediately behind the entrance structure is presently occupied by an industrial land use. The planting of additional screening landscaping behind the entrance structure would considerably improve the visual quality of this entrance. An additional community entrance is recommended to be established at the intersection of 7th Avenue and Whitley Avenue to provide a focal point for traffic entering the community from the west. The Corcoran Airport is located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection. Consideration should be given to developing a community entrance in conjunction with landscaping that portion of the airport which fronts on Whitley Avenue.

The scenic routes recommended for Corcoran are the following streets:

Dairy Avenue from Patterson Avenue to Whitley Avenue  
Otis Avenue from Orange Avenue to Whitley Avenue  
Santa Fe Avenue from State Highway 43 to Orange Avenue  
Whitley Avenue from 7th Avenue to State Highway 43

Dairy Avenue is a major arterial running in a north to south direction through the community, generally connecting the residential areas in the



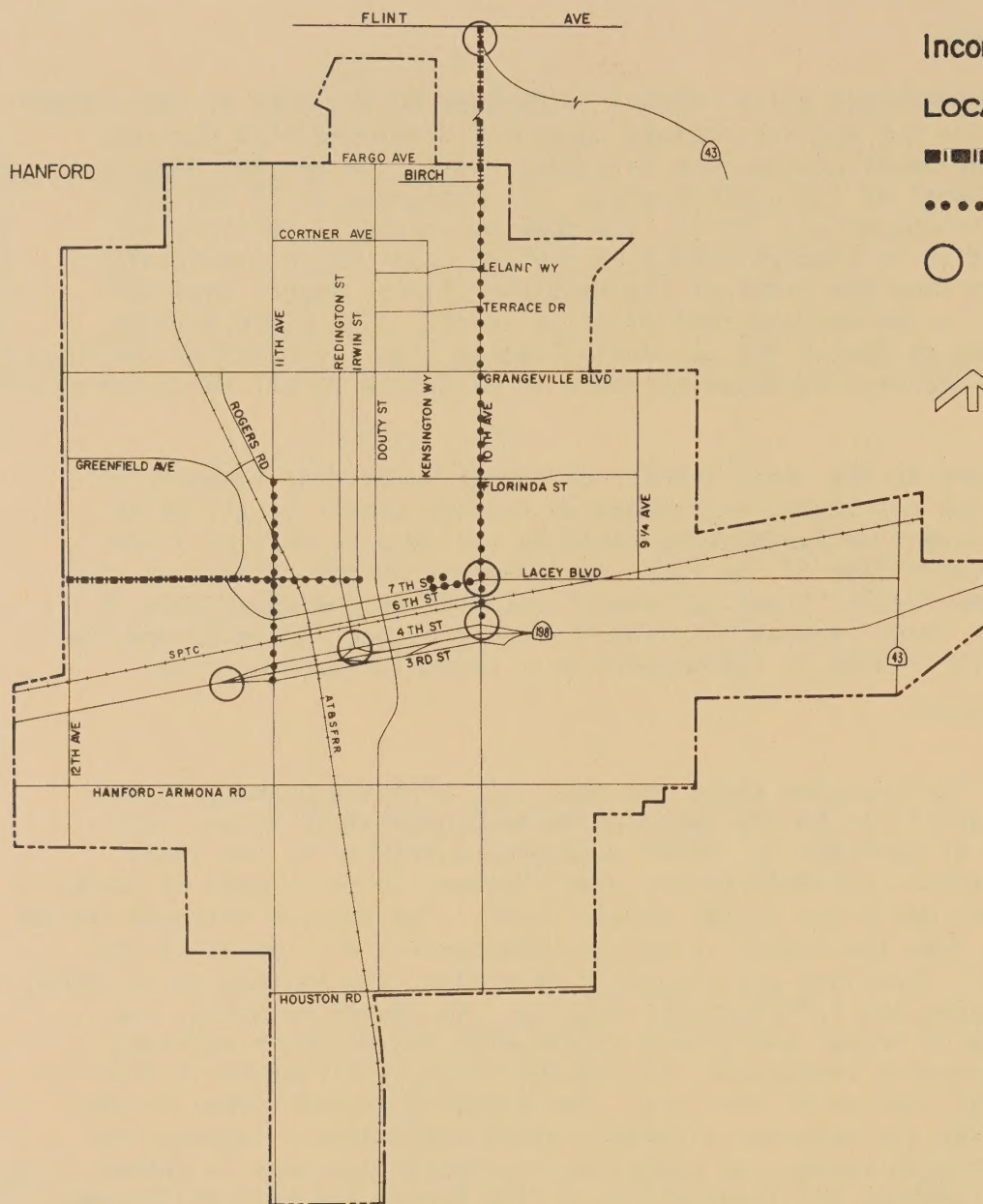
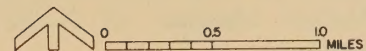
Incorporated Communities

LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

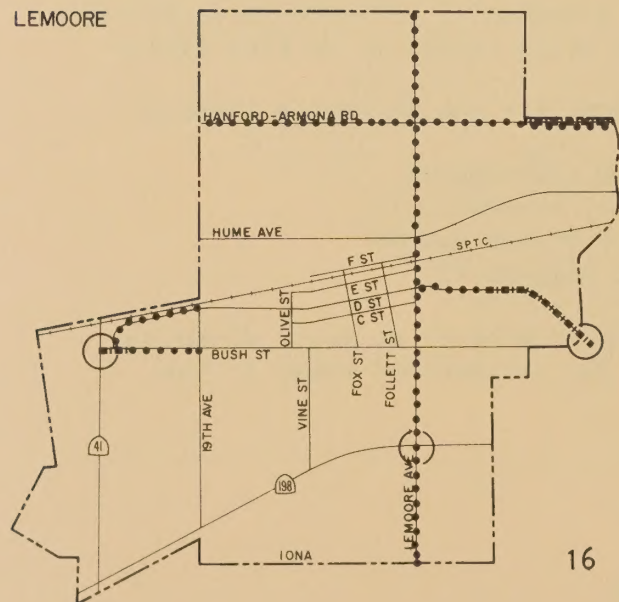
■■■■■■■■■■ COUNTY ROADS

..... CITY STREETS

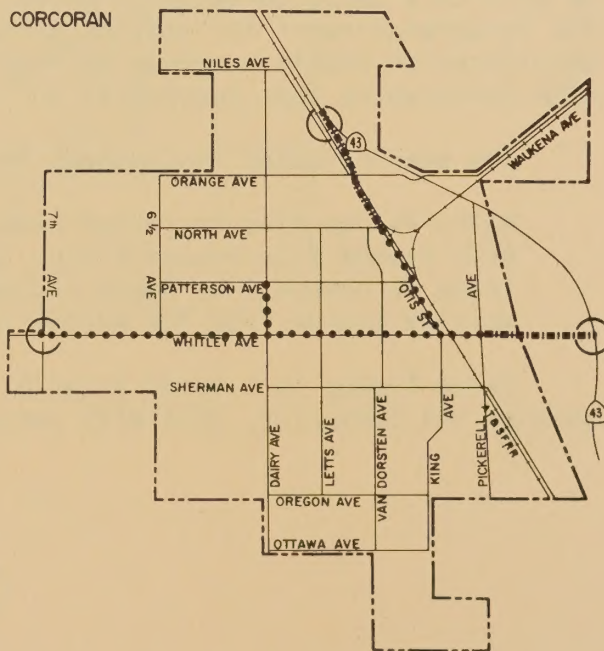
○ COMMUNITY ENTRANCES



LEMOORE



CORCORAN





northern and southern portions of Corcoran with retail services, schools and parks located in the central portion of Corcoran. The new community center and regional park front on Dairy Avenue. The portion recommended as a scenic route contains adequate right-of-way to permit landscaping improvements. The *Corcoran Transportation and Circulation Element* recommends installing sidewalks along the west side of a portion of Dairy Avenue including the proposed scenic route to reduce safety hazards to school children walking to the Fremont Elementary School. Installation of this improvement offers a unique opportunity to consider proper design and landscaping treatments for the scenic enhancement of the route. Similarly, landscaping and parking lot design for the new community center currently under construction should reflect a relationship to the proposed scenic corridor.

Otis Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue provide northern access to or exit from the community for traffic using State Highway 43. Their inclusion in the scenic system provides a logical extension of the community entrance point at Santa Fe Avenue and State Highway 43. The Corcoran Environmental Resources Management Element recommends shoulder landscaping of Otis Avenue, particularly along the railroad right-of-way. A portion of such landscaping has already begun with the planting of Oleanders along both sides of the northern portion of Otis. Although Santa Fe Avenue is not within its incorporated limits, Corcoran should seek the cooperation of the County to install landscaping similar to that on Otis Avenue. Efforts should also be made to encourage the trucking operation located on the east side of Santa Fe Avenue to screen off its storage yard.

Whitley Avenue provides east/west circulation through the central portion of Corcoran, being the "main street" of the community, passing through the central business district. The portion recommended as a scenic route would provide scenic entrances from the east and the west. Scenic improvements to Whitley Avenue could take several approaches. The frontage between 6½ and Dairy Avenues, particularly to the north, is largely undeveloped. New residential development to the north is stimulating proposals for new commercial development on Whitley. All aspects of the proposals, including siting of the structures, architectural treatments and landscaping should address the scenic route designation of Whitley. The central portion of Whitley traverses the central business district. The downtown merchants, in cooperation with the City, have been investigating the feasibility of undertaking a renewal program to improve the aesthetic character and thus increase the attraction of the central business district. The beautification of Whitley consistent with scenic route standards should be a part of this program. The eastern portion of Whitley between Otis Avenue and State Highway 43 is fronted on agricultural land with the exception of the commercial and industrial area between Otis Avenue and Pickerell Avenue. Like Santa Fe Avenue the agricultural portion of Whitley is in the County. Inclusion of this land in the Land Conservation Act would preserve its open space character. It would have the added benefit of preserving a clear approach or take-off zone around the Salyer Airport runway. The scenic or aesthetic character of Whitley Avenue in the portion between Otis Avenue and Pickerell Avenue could be upgraded with tree planting and remodeled as part of the central business district renewal program. As the community can be expected to continue and spread further to portions of the central business district.



## Hanford

The *Open Space and Conservation Element* of the Hanford General Plan designates four locations within the city which could be appropriate for a landscaped entrance: In the northern portion of the community where State Highway 43 bears east from 10th Avenue; and at three locations along Highway 198 where freeway off-ramps serve as community entrances -- 10th and 11th Avenues, and Redington Avenue. The northern community entrance at 10th Avenue and Highway 43 is presently developed (Plate .) The other locations indicated in the *Open Space Element* remain undeveloped at present, but would all benefit from having improved landscaping and signing directing visitors to the downtown area. An additional scenic entrance location is proposed for the intersection of 7th Street and 10th Avenue to direct attention to China Alley.

The recommended scenic routes for Hanford are also in conformance with the recommendations, with two modifications, contained in the *Open Space Element* as follows:

- 11th Avenue from Florinda Avenue to State Highway 198.
- Lacey Boulevard from 12th Avenue to Irwin Avenue.
- 10th Avenue from State Highway 43 to State Highway 198.
- 7th Street from 10th Avenue to Green Street, including China Alley.

Opportunities for enhancement of these routes are good because of development of the new County Civic Center on West Lacey Boulevard and the anticipated improvement of Lacey Boulevard between 12th and 11th Avenues and 10th Avenue between Grangeville Boulevard and Lacey Boulevard with Federal Aid-Urban program.

The portion recommended for inclusion, in addition to the routes recommended in the *Open Space Element* is that portion of 10th Avenue from State Highway 43 to Flint Avenue. It traverses predominately agricultural areas which can be protected by placement into the Land Conservation Act. Portions of the agricultural land on the west are already in the Act.

The *Open Space Element* recommends parkway and median strip landscaping for each of these routes. This program has already begun on 11th Avenue between Lacey Boulevard and 7th Street.

## Lemoore

Highways 198 and 41 provide major access points to Lemoore at Houston Avenue/D Street and 18th Avenue and Bush Street, respectively. Minor entrances to Lemoore exist on 18th Avenue at the north city boundary, and on the Hanford-Armona Road at the eastern edge of the community, but both routes are less significant entrances than those on 41 and 198. Bush Street, off Highway 41, is presently signed, as is the Hanford-Armona Road. The other entrances are presently undeveloped, and it is apparent that D Street and 18th Avenue would be the two locations where any efforts toward entrance beautification or formalization would be of most value.

Reinforcement of the community entrances off State Highways 41 and 198 could be accomplished by designation of the following routes as scenic:



Bush Street from State Highway 41 to 19th Avenue.

D Street from Houston Avenue to Lemoore Avenue and 19th Avenue to Bush Street

Hanford-Armona Road from the Lemoore Canal to 19th Avenue

Lemoore Avenue from Hanford-Armona Road to Iona Avenue

Bush Street provides the major access to Lemoore from Highway 41. It has sufficient right-of-way (80 feet) to accomodate parkway landscaping. This treatment is particularly feasible since much of the area south of the route is undeveloped. However, this portion of Bush plus its intersection with Highway 41 lie outside of the incorporated City limits. Therefore a vigorous effort by Lemoore to secure the cooperation of the County to develop the street as a scenic route should be undertaken.

The "D" Street and Houston Avenue fork offers a unique opportunity to develop a major community entrance complete with a rest area and informational center. "D" Street provides access to the central protion of Lemoore from Highway 198. The triangular portion of land bounded by "D" Street, Houston Avenue, and Bush Street could be selectively cleared, and landscaped as a rest area. Traveler's information to community services could be provided by installation of a "kiosk" or other such structure. The difficulty again arises, similar to Bush Street, in that the property is not within the incorporated City limits. The best solution would be direct acquisition of the property. The remaining portion of "D" Street is largely undeveloped until the residential development by Lemoore Avenue. Its right-of-way is 80 feet, sufficient for parkway landscaping. Developments adjacent to "D" Street should be reviewed, giving due consideration to its scenic route status.

The portion of Hanford-Armona Road recommended for inclusion as a scenic route is largely undeveloped, thus having a high potential for improvement to scenic route standards. The residential development off the southeast portion of the road establishes a substantial precedent for future design with its inclusion of a frontage road.

Lemoore Avenue is a major arterial in the community serving the residential areas to the north with access to the high school, the central business district, Highway 198, and the municipal golf course. As the vacant areas traversed by Lemoore Avenue between Hume Avenue and Hanford-Armona Road develop, its' importance to the community will grow and the need to improve it will become a top priority. Improvement of Lemoore Avenue should be carried out consistent with the goals and standards applicable to scenic routes.



## IV. SCENIC HIGHWAY PROCEDURES

### A. STATE DESIGNATION

In order to gain official State designation for scenic highways proposed by this element, certain procedures must be followed and certain standards must be implemented. The following outline indicates those procedures required to gain State designation as official State or County scenic highways. The outline was derived from *The Scenic Route/A Guide for the Designation of an Official Scenic Highway* as prepared by the Interdepartmental Committee on Scenic Highways.

Since this element proposes both official and unofficial scenic routes the following outline is intended to serve only those routes recommended to be official routes.

#### 1. Initiation

The procedure leading to official designation must be initiated by a resolution from the governing body of the local jurisdiction making application for designation. Thus, in Kings County application is begun by notification in writing to the District 6 Director of the California Department of Transportation by the local jurisdiction which, when dealing with the State scenic highway system would be the Kings County Board of Supervisors, and when dealing with the official County scenic highways system would be the Supervisors or any one of the City Councils.

On April 4, 1972, the Kings County Board of Supervisors, by minute order, authorized its Planning Department to request initiation of the process for official designation of the portion of State Highway 41 designated in the State Master Plan and lying within Kings County. The planning department also corresponded with Kern and San Luis Obispo Counties in an attempt to coordinate the required studies on the entire segment of Highway 41 designated in the Master Plan as contained between State Highways 33 and 46.

The State also has the authority to initiate action for designation on its own initiative. However, for the most part, local agencies are encouraged to indicate their interest by initiating the process. In any case, the State Department of Transportation must coordinate the required studies and assist the local agencies.

#### 2. Scenic Highway Studies

Corridor and Facility Study. For those highways eligible for designation under the State scenic highways program, the District Director must, upon notification by a local agency, prepare within a reasonable period of time, a "Corridor Survey" covering the following items:



- a. Route or alignment of the highway, including any proposed realignments, if known.
- b. Scenic elements adjacent to the roadway.
- c. Relationship of the roadway to the surrounding environment and to the preservation and visibility of the scenic elements.
- d. Suggested corridor boundaries for the route.
- e. Indication of potential areas for public or commercial information sites, roadside rests, and vista stations.

The District Director must also conduct a "Highway Facility Study" which is comprised of an evaluation of the adequacy and condition of the roadway itself. The study should also include an identification of any improvements needed to bring the roadway up to applicable standards. Upon completion, the report must be submitted to the Director of the Department of Transportation for his approval.

Either concurrently or upon completion and approval of the Department of Transportation studies, the local agency must propose a "Specific Plan" for the route, identifying the scenic resources within the scenic corridor standards and measures for protecting and maintaining those resources. The route cannot be officially designated by the State without the completion of a specific plan.

In response to the initiation request by Kings County to the District 6 Engineer, a meeting was held in June 1972 to discuss strategies for completing the required studies for Highway 41. No progress has been made to date by District 6 staff towards the completion of these studies.

For those routes recommended by this element for designation as official county scenic highways, the same studies must be completed in order to be eligible for such designation. However, the local agency initiating the process must conduct the studies. The District Director must provide assistance, but his office is not required to develop any of the studies.

### 3. Review

Upon completion and approval the required studies must be transmitted by the District Director of the Department of Transportation to the Interdepartmental Committee on Scenic Highways. The Interdepartmental Committee must review and comment on the reports and forward their comments with the reports to the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee must then conduct a review of the reports and their accompanying comments for determination of a recommendation for approval, disapproval, or request for additions or revisions to the State Director of the Department of Transportation.



The State Director must, upon the advice of the Advisory Committee, inform the local agency and the District office of his decision regarding the qualification of the request and accompanying reports for official State or County scenic highway designation. His approval means that if the local agency implements its proposed precise plan for the route, he will, with the advice of the Advisory Committee, designate the route as an official State or County scenic route.

#### 4. Implementation

Upon notification of approval by the State Director, the local agency must proceed to establish the corridor boundaries and enact the precise plan. In the case of Highway 41, the Kings County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors would have to adopt the scenic corridor boundaries and the proposed precise plan. After adoption, the County would then apply to the District Director for designation of the previously described portion of Highway 41 as an "Official State Scenic Highway". The County must also submit a report on the enactment of the proper measures to preserve and maintain the scenic corridor. The application and report shall then be processed in accord with the process described in Section 3, Review.

Upon receipt of the findings and recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the State Director shall make his own findings that that facility, the corridor boundaries, and the adopted precise plan conform to the minimum standards for an "Official State or County Scenic Highway". He shall then so designate the highway and notify the Advisory Committee and the local agency of his action.

The designated highway may then be shown as an official scenic highway on any maps or publications. If the highway is part of the State scenic highway system, it can also be properly signed with the official State "poppy" sign. However, if the highway is an officially designated county scenic highway, the local agency can develop its own unique identification sign.

The standards and measures adopted by the local agency for protection and enhancement of the scenic corridor must be effectively maintained and enforced by the local agency in order to retain official State designation. Pursuant to this requirement, the local agency must also submit an annual report to the proper District Director of the California Department of Transportation, describing the status of the corridor protection program. The Department of Transportation must review the annual report and submit it, together with comments, to the Interdepartmental Committee and finally to the Advisory Committee.

#### 5. Revocation

The Advisory Committee, upon finding that the corridor no longer meets the minimum standards for official designation, based on the reports of the State Department of Transportation, the Interdepartmental Committee, or upon its own findings, may recommend to the State Director of the Department of Transportation that official designation of the highway be revoked.



After conferring with the local agency, the State Director, may upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and upon his own findings, revoke such designation. The "Official Scenic Highway" shall then be deleted from any new maps or other publications and the signs which so identify the highway shall be removed.

## B. COUNTY/CITY DESIGNATION

The basic procedures leading to official designation of a scenic route as required by the State can be incorporated into the local government process with some modification. The following procedure is offered as a guideline only. It is generalized and not all inclusive. Each local agency should amend it to fit their own individual procedures and needs.

### 1. Initiation

Adoption of this element by the city councils of each of the cities and the County Board of Supervisors will establish the scenic system as shown on Plates 3, 4, and 5 and discussed in Chapter III. This action would then signify to city and county staff that scenic corridor and community entrance studies should then begin as requested. Since the County scenic system is proposed to be developed as the recreational areas served by the system are developed, the immediate development of corridor surveys for the entire system would not be necessary. The cities and the unincorporated communities should undertake corridor and community entrance surveys in accord with the priorities established by the respective policy bodies.

### 2. Corridor and Community Entrance Studies

The planning and/or public works departments of the respective agencies should cooperatively undertake the corridor and community entrance studies. The studies should cover the same items required for official State scenic route designation as discussed in the previous section.

The analysis of community entrance development should include:

- a. Potential as a roadside rest or public or private information center.
- b. Relationship of site to the surrounding area.
- c. Maximum site area necessary for development.
- d. Acquisition and improvement costs.
- e. Maintenance costs and assignment of responsibilities.

Preparation of all corridor and community entrance studies must be accompanied by the environmental assessments necessary to comply with applicable provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970.

### 3. Review

The completed corridor or community entrance studies should be submitted to a standing or ad hoc citizens advisory committee for



their review and comment. The establishment of scenic corridors can only be successful if the property owners within or fronting on the corridor and the community at large understand the implications of the corridor and offer their support and cooperation. A citizens committee is a means of providing an early opportunity for the community to be made aware of the program and to submit their reaction and comments to it. The completed studies, together with the input of the citizens advisory committee should be submitted to the planning commission for their review and recommendation to the policy body.

#### 4. Implementation

The City Council for each city or the County Board of Supervisors, upon consideration of the studies and the recommendation of a planning commission, should determine whether or not a scenic corridor is to be established or a community entrance is to be developed. If they approve establishment of the corridor, the precise boundaries of the corridors should be described, the scenic corridor overlay zone as recommended in Chapter VI should be established, and the recommended standards for the protection and maintenance of the corridor should be applied.



## V. SCENIC CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION

The State guidelines for designation of official scenic highways defines a scenic corridor as a band of land generally adjacent to the highway right-of-way but excluding the right-of-way itself. For the purposes of this element, the definition will be applied only to those routes, generally State highways, which are recommended for the official State designation procedure. As later discussions will point out, this definition will not apply in all cases to the city and County scenic routes, although the recommended standards for protection and maintenance of the scenic corridors over the entire system are intended to be applied uniformly.

### A. CRITERIA

The general criteria for identifying scenic corridors as contained in the State guidelines is as follows:

#### 1. Human Element

- a. Aesthetic Judgement. No exacting specifications can be established for the delineation of corridor boundaries, nor can they replace the judgment of trained and experienced persons from State and local agencies, private firms, and citizens. These criteria only form bases on which to formulate a judgment.
- b. Angle and Duration of Vision. Passengers have a generally wide sweep of vision offered by modern cars, oriented in the direction of travel by the seating arrangement. The driver, however, must operate within a relatively narrow cone of vision centered on the roadway ahead, with limited impression made by his peripheral vision of lateral objects. The angle at which certain areas and features of the landscape may be seen from the highway, in both directions of travel, the foreground features framing them, and the period of time during which they can be observed will bear on the delineation of the corridor. Consequently, design speed and geometrics of the highway, and the existence or possibility of roadside rest areas and vista stations, must be taken into consideration. The scenic highway should provide the motorist with a total and continuous, though varied, visual experience. This continuity should be accomplished by an uninterrupted corridor.

#### 2. Range of Visibility

- a. Topography. When a land form, such as the crest of a ridge, brings the range of vision from the highway close to the right-of-way (e.g., half a mile), the entire visible area should be included in the corridor.



- b. Vegetation. Vineyards, orchards, or field crops, may constitute a screen at the edges of the highway. Such a screen might be removed accidentally or deliberately by fire, harvesting, land use change, or selective cutting for vista enhancement. Consideration should be given to locating the corridor boundaries beyond this type of screen and into land otherwise visible from the highway.
- c. Structures. For similar reasons, buildings or other structures obstructing the visibility may not necessarily be the controlling determinant for corridor boundaries.
- d. Distant Visibility. Where distant horizons or vast panoramas are visible from the highway, a corridor boundary closer than the visual range should be selected on criteria other than visibility. The high aesthetic standards required to be enforced as part of the Scenic System Program should be realistically limited to land having the greatest visual impact on the highway. In some cases, a distant, non-contiguous area may be included in the corridor, and a less critical closer area may be excluded.

### 3. Scenery Characteristics

- a. Natural and Man-made Features. Outstanding features, whether natural such as rivers or geological formations, or man-made such as canals, reservoirs, old bridges, or buildings of architectural, historical, or civic value, should normally be included in the corridor together with their necessary surrounding background.
- b. Landscape Character. All types of landscape, whether natural, cultivated or urban, may have scenic values and should be considered for inclusion in the corridor. In existing urban landscapes, the density of development and problems of implementation may call for a narrower corridor.
- c. Ecology. An ecological unit is often destroyed when parts of it are encroached upon or damaged. The integrity of such unit, and the flora and fauna constituting its scenic value, should be preserved by including all of it in the corridor wherever feasible, regardless of the visibility factor.
- d. Visual Impact. The visual impact of a feature or an area may be evaluated in terms of its uniqueness, its size, the scale of its details, boldness of form, vividness of color and other specific characteristics in relation to its distance from the viewer and the duration of the visual experience. The degree of this impact is a factor in the inclusion of a feature or an area in the corridor.



#### 4. Administrative Considerations

- a. Probable Methods of Protection. The likelihood that certain areas will be protected by such means as acquisition for a public use or scenic highway overlay zoning influences the delineation of the corridor. (This underscores the need to study specific implementation methods simultaneously with the study of corridor boundaries).
- b. Legal Boundaries. The precise boundaries of the corridor, since they are to be used for administrative purposes, should coincide wherever possible with property lines, zoning district boundaries, city limits, or other legal delineations.
- c. Arbitrary Delineation. In the absence of factors such as those listed in this section, or because of their noncontrolling nature, a constant line, somewhat arbitrarily selected, should be used for the corridor boundary. A distance of half a mile from the roadway is recommended in this case.

#### B. OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATED SCENIC ROUTES

Corridors for officially designated scenic routes should be established in accord with the criteria listed in the preceding Section. The portion of State Highway 41 included in the State Master Plan as eligible for designation as a scenic highway was selected as an example for application of the criteria. A windshield survey of the route was conducted to determine the major features of the landscape which might form the basis for corridor delineation. Plate 6 depicts the results of the survey, showing in simplified terms the major natural and man-made features of the landscape. For the purposes of the corridor survey, a topographic map such as a U.S. Geological Survey Map should be used to establish more precisely the relationship of the route to the surrounding landscape. A typical application of the corridor criteria to the survey findings can be developed as follows:

##### 1. Scenic Elements

The terrain covered by the section of State Highway 41 is a transition from a flat valley floor into the varying elevations of hills, then gradually back to a Valley floor. Proceeding in a southwesterly direction from Reef City, the cultivated and grazing lands of the Kettleman Plains are quickly left behind to enter the Pyramid Hills.

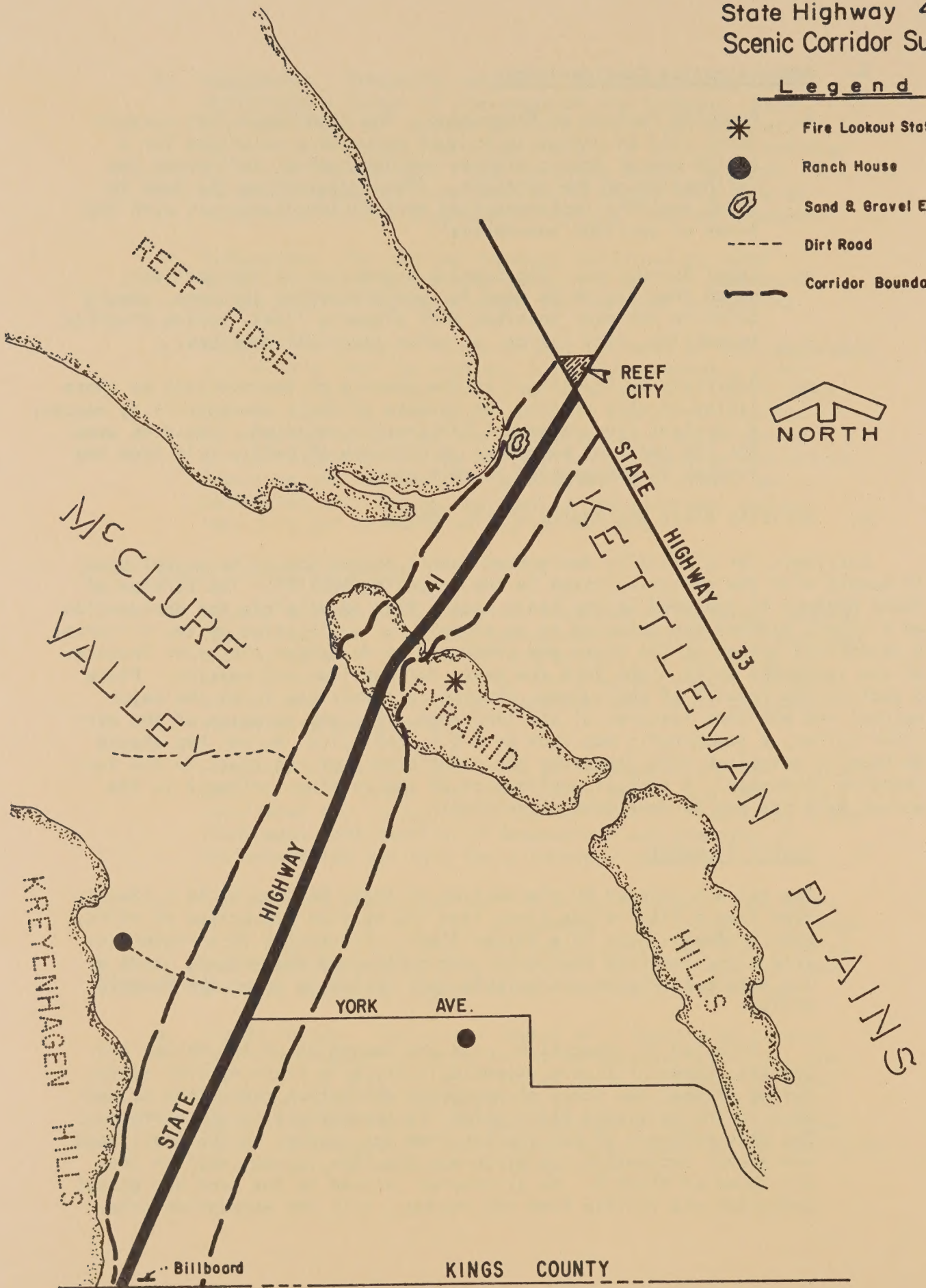
Divested of vegetation, with the exception of low shrubs and grasses, these hills are essentially still in their natural state, having escaped the scars of petroleum extraction operations so evident in the Kettleman Hills which lie immediately to the northwest. The only evidence of man visible from the roadway is the small sand and gravel excavation operation and the fire lookout station that are shown on Plate 6. No structures related to the sand and gravel operation are visible from the roadway, only the excavation area.



Plate 6  
State Highway 41  
Scenic Corridor Survey

Legend

- \* Fire Lookout Station
- Ranch House
- Sand & Gravel Excavation
- Dirt Road
- Corridor Boundary



KINGS COUNTY  
KERN COUNTY



Because the operation appears to be of such small scale, the movement of excavated material could be done to create mounds which would blend into the hills and effectively shield the operation from view. The fire lookout station is primarily visible to northbound traffic approaching the Pyramid Hills. However, its distance from the roadway tends to minimize the scale of the structure and thus reduce its intrusion on the panorama visible from the roadway.

Dropping down into the McClure Valley from the Pyramid Hills offers a view which is characterized by the facilities necessary for vattle grazing, mainly barbed wire fencing. The portion of the Valley visible from the roadway contains only two ranch houses. The vegetation, like the Pyramid Hills, consists primarily of low shrubs and grasses. The only visible trees are clustered about each ranch house, tending to screen them from view.

An excellent vista of the Avenal Ridge portion of the Kreyenhagen Hills is visible from the roadway for almost five miles from the top of the Pyramid Hills, across McClure Valley to the County line. The man-made elements which detract from the view consist of the telephone and power line poles which traverse the route at various points and the single billboard located just within the County line.

Wildlife in the area consists primarily of small mammals, including rabbits, pheasants, quail, chuckar, and the kit fox, which is an endangered species. The cultivation on the Kettleman Plains and excavation operations in the Pyramid Hills are detrimental to wildlife because they destroy or alter habitat areas. Cattle grazing also impacts habitat areas but to a lesser degree because natural vegetation is not entirely eliminated nor is the terrain changed to any major degree.

## 2. Relationship of Route to Landscape

The entire portion of the route under consideration has been aligned in the most economical manner to traverse the Pyramid Hills and enter the Kreyenhagen Hills. In this particular case, however, little is lost in terms of access to the scenic elements and panoramas available in the area because of the following factors:

- a. Short Duration of View. The length of the scenic route is eight miles which, at fifty-five miles per hour, can be covered in roughly nine minutes.
- b. View from Valley is not affected by road alignment. Minimal change in elevation and the lack of any major vegetation, such as trees, make viewing of the surrounding area available from almost any point in the Valley.



- c. Alignment through Pyramid Hills is adequate; more attention could have been given to routing the road to give maximum access to vistas, etc., but since the features of the terrain are fairly uniform and since the distance traveled through the hills is less than three miles, the benefit to cost ratio applied to user convenience versus scenic access would be heavily weighted towards user convenience.

### 3. Proposed Corridor Boundaries

The proposed boundaries are shown on Plate 6. The Valley portions of the route do not have any uniquely distinguishable scenic characteristic which can be used as a basis for the establishment of corridor boundaries. Therefore the State standard of establishing the boundary a distance of half a mile from the centerline of the roadway was used. Establishment of the scenic corridor overlay zone would serve to protect the imposition of any man-made structures which would detract from or obscure the view from the road. The corridor boundaries through the Pyramid Hills generally should follow, in conformance with State criteria, the crests of hills which are near to and visible from the roadway. The boundaries shown on Plate 6 are, in the absence of topographical base map data, meant to be representational only.

The preceding outline does not satisfy all of the elements of the precise plan required for official State scenic route designation. It is presented only to illustrate the manner in which State scenic corridor criteria can be applied to a particular route. It can, however form the basis or starting point for development of a specific plan for State Highway 41. Similar plans should be developed for those routes recommended for official State designation as scenic routes, including State Highways 33 and 198.

### C. LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

The State definition for a "scenic corridor" will not apply in all cases to local scenic routes, particularly city streets. The characteristics of the "view from the road" offered by the urban environment differs considerably from the rural landscape. Elements of the city street are dominated by man-made structures located fairly close to the street, contracting the field of vision. County roads, on the other hand, traverse areas where open space or an expansive field of vision are dominant. The detail required to establish corridor boundaries on local scenic routes is beyond the scope of this element. The recommendations which follow are therefore offered as a general reference to be considered during development of a specific plan for each particular segment of the local system.

1. The delineation of corridor boundaries of those portions of local routes which provide "vistas" or "panoramic views" should be established in accordance with State definitions and criteria.



2. Scenic corridors along local routes which are characterized by man-made elements, such as residences and commercial structures, should be contained within the road or street right-of-way.
3. The provisions of the proposed scenic corridor overlay zone on corridors contained within road rights-of-way should apply to properties abutting the scenic corridor. The application of the provisions, such as siting requirements, will vary in relation to the unique conditions of the property under consideration.
4. Protection of lands under the direct jurisdiction of federal, state or local agencies should be achieved through the land management practices of these agencies. Their management policies should reflect the standards suggested in Chapter VI.
5. Public works operations beyond the scenic highway itself should be reviewed for their compliance with the intent of the program. Levees, jetties, dams, county roads, city streets, public signs, etc., should conform to the standards of this program. Intersections of the scenic highway with new county roads or city streets should be severely limited.
6. Programs of street tree planting, landscaping of public grounds, and selective vista clearing should be undertaken by the appropriate public agencies.
7. The complex program of governmental actions involved in urban renewal and redevelopment projects could be utilized in some cases for the improvement of the scenic corridor.



## VI. IMPLEMENTATION

This element identifies, in Chapter III, a recommended scenic system for each of the three cities and the County. Adoption of this element by these agencies will establish the system and identify in general terms specific corridors and community entrances. The next step would be development and adoption of specific plans which should include measures for establishing and managing a scenic system program and identifying in precise terms scenic corridor boundaries. The boundaries should coincide wherever possible with property lines, zone district boundaries, city limits, or other legal delineations.

Various methods are available to local government for establishing and managing scenic corridors and community entrances in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the scenic highways element. The standards and methodology proposed below conform to State requirements for "official" scenic highway designation and are recommended to be applied to the entire scenic system as it is established by the cities and County. The extent to which these recommendations are used will be an indication of their suitability to fulfilling the unique needs of each of the three cities and the County. They are not all inclusive nor are they meant to be applied uniformly to the entire scenic system. For this reason, a continuous effort should be made to discover and evaluate new methods for carrying out the goals and objectives of this element.

### A. ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

The most direct and effective program for maintaining and enhancing scenic corridors and community entrances is direct or partial acquisition of land within the corridor boundaries. This assures complete control of the scenic resource by the city or county having jurisdiction over the corridor. However, the implications of such a program are (a) The high costs for purchasing or acquiring specified rights to the land involved, (b) Elimination of the potential for private development, (c) A lowering of property tax revenues, and (d) High cost of maintenance. The most prudent application of such a program would be to small parcels of land which are either necessary to a community entrance plan as open space/rest area or necessary to preserve a parcel of land which contains a scenic resource of major significance to the region. Acquisition programs available to the cities and County include the following:

#### 1. Purchase

a. Simple purchase such as outright negotiation of purchase and immediate full payment of price upon completion of the agreement. This process is permitted for scenic lands by Sections 6950-7000 in Chapter 12 of the California Government Code. The cities and County have made use of this process in the past for primarily recreational purposes and community entrance locations. Examples include the Tenth Avenue entrance to Hanford from State Highway 43, the Whitley Avenue entrance east of Corcoran, and the Laton-Kingston Park site by the County.



b. Installment sale: Similar to simple purchase, except payment is made over a number of years. Each annual payment purchases a particular portion of the full parcel, but the seller retains possession of the property until the sale is completed.

c. Tax sale: Purchase of tax certificates which state or local tax collectors have established as a lien on the property; sale can be negotiated with the owner.

d. Excess land: Land declared as excess by other public agencies, particularly state and federal agencies, can be purchased at the original cost, plus interest. Highway land may be used for a wide variety of public uses including parks, open space or scenic vistas and bicycle paths. Authority for the sale of highway right-of-way for such purposes is established by the Porter Act of 1969, the Marler-Johnson Act of 1969, and the Bicycle Safety and Recreation Trails Act of 1971.

e. Less-than-fee interest: Purchase of specific rights or controls on property such as a scenic easement to prohibit development. The property owner retains title.

## 2. Subdivision Dedication

This method of acquisition requires the developer of a tract of land to "dedicate" or donate land for various public uses. The subdivision ordinances presently being utilized by the cities and County do not specifically require dedication for scenic route purposes, although they allow for sufficient road right-of-way dedications to permit the installation of scenic amenities such as landscaping. Examples of those roads are Tenth Avenue in Hanford just north of Grangeville Boulevard and Hanford-Armona Road in Lemoore just east of Lemoore Avenue. Hanford is presently the only local agency actively exploring the feasibility of permitting a cash payment in lieu of dedication of land for public purposes.

## 3. Donations

Property owners can donate all or a portion of their land within scenic corridors or community entrances for open space purposes. They can include restrictions to insure the land is utilized only for uses compatible with the scenic corridor. An incentive for donations is the opportunity for the donor to deduct the current market value of the land from his income tax. This can result in a substantial tax benefit to the donor and insure preservation of scenic corridor land for the public. The procedure for a donation is "gift-deeding" the property to a city or the County for open space, conservation, recreation or historic preservation purposes. A similar method of donation with the establishment of restrictions is the creation of a land trust. The donated land is then administered for the public interest by a private, self-perpetuating Board which is not subject to governmental actions.



Cash donations are also possible within the provisions of Section 155 of the California Streets and Highways Code. Any money received under this provision will be deposited in the Special Interest Stopping Place Fund, as created by the State Treasury.

Although voluntary donations are often felt to be extremely difficult to obtain, efforts in this area should not be totally ignored. An excellent example of successful efforts can be seen in the City of Corcoran which has obtained several public facilities through donations of land, money or labor.

Additional acquisition programs are in the form of providing tax incentives to private groups or individuals, listed as follows:

- a. *California Land Conservation Act of 1965* (Williamson Act) - as applied to agricultural land.

The Williamson Act provides that land used for agricultural purposes be taxed on the basis of its highest and best restricted use. The restrictions are listed in a ten-year contract designed to ensure the agricultural use of the land in return for a tax benefit for the owner. For the most part, the beauty of our rural landscape in Kings County has been created by farmers and the Land Conservation Program as a step in the proper direction for preservation of scenic views.

- b. *California Land Conservation Act of 1965* - as applied to other than agricultural land.

As enacted, the *California Land Conservation Act of 1965* was limited in its application to agricultural land as defined by the Act. During the 1969 regular session of the legislature, eligibility was extended to certain "open space uses" defined by the Act in Section 51201 (n) as follows:

"Open Space Use" is the use or maintenance of land in such a manner as to preserve its natural characteristics, beauty or openness for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, and to provide essential habitat for wildlife if such land is within:

- 1) A Scenic Highway Corridor
- 2) A Wildlife Habitat Area

Establishment of Scenic Corridors (surrounding scenic highways) by the County, will allow certain nonagriculturally-used land to be eligible for a tax reduction upon agreement by the landowner to preserve the scenic qualities of the land.

## B. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The fundamental administrative tools of local government can form the basis for the establishment and maintenance of scenic corridors and community entrances.



Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes traditionally form the basis for implementing programs which affect the physical development and environment of the region. The scenic highways element is no exception to this process. The State guidelines require implementation of certain minimum standards to maintain official scenic highway status. The standards proposed below conform to the State guidelines and, in several instances, are currently being utilized by the cities and County.

## 1. Land Use

### a. Zoning

The traditional tool used by local government to control land use patterns and densities is the application of zoning districts. Scenic corridors require the application of zones which will minimize the intrusion of urban-type development in open space areas, permit only commercial uses related to traveler needs, and achieve design treatments which either blend into or accent the primary features of the landscape. Various types of zone districts are available to meet scenic corridor requirements. They can be classified into the following three categories:

- 1) Scenic Highway Corridor Zone created specifically for application to scenic corridors.
- 2) Overlay zones which modify and supplement the provisions of an underlying zone.
- 3) Generalized zones designed to enhance and protect a variety of uses or conditions including open space, natural resources, historic sites, recreational areas, flood plains, etc.

The zoning ordinances of the cities and the County, with the exception of Lemoore, contain provisions for application of a Natural Resources and Conservation (NRC) Zone district which falls within the third category discussed above. The general uses permitted in the NRC zone include open space areas for the protection of flood control and irrigation facilities, water re-charging basins, recreational areas, and, in the case of Corcoran, school sites. The zone district does not contain provisions for controlling site areas, heights and distances between structures, densities, or screening. The County zoning ordinance contains an additional district, the Recreation (O) zone district. It is intended to be applied to public and private recreation areas to mitigate development impacts on the scenic recreation areas in the county.

It is recommended that these zone districts be supplemented with the creation of a Scenic Corridor (SC) overlay zone to be applied within the boundaries of the proposed scenic corridors. In overlay zoning, the regulations of the underlying or existing zone still apply in addition to the regulations of the overlay zone. The creation of this zone district will provide a means for implementing the standards outlined in the following sections of



this chapter. A model scenic corridor overlay zone, derived from one adopted by San Diego County in 1972, is included in the Appendix as a guide.

b. Building Heights and Setbacks

Heights and setbacks of structures should be regulated so as not to obstruct important views. A variety of standards may be applied in order to achieve this purpose under different conditions.

c. Screening

Existing or indispensable offensive land uses should be effectively screened from view from the highway, or inconspicuously located if within a scenic corridor. Effective screening can be accomplished by proper use of planting, grading, or attractive fencing.

d. Site Plan Review

The administrative process used by planning departments to assure the proper application of development standards, such as building location and heights, signing, etc., to proposed construction or improvement of a specific parcel of land.

2. Signs and Outdoor Advertising

a. On-Premises Signs

The size, height, number, and type of on-premises sign allowed should be the minimum necessary for identification. The design, materials, color, texture, and/or location should relate to their surrounding environment. Every attempt should be made to use signs for identification and not as a means of advertising.

b. Off-Premises Signs

Off-premises outdoor advertising will not be permitted in the corridor, except for an approved informational or directional panel. This is a minimum standard for the "official designation" of scenic highways.

c. Urban Related Signs

Where a scenic highway runs through an urban area, signs and outdoor advertising should be given special consideration. Sign and outdoor advertising regulations should be reviewed in their urban context and relate to such considerations as: Protection of urban views, compliance with public safety, and respect for the proportionate and orderly appearance of advertising in relation to the environment.



### 3. Utility Lines

#### a. Underground Placement

The Undergrounding Public Utilities Program, as set forth in the California Public Utilities Commission Decision No. 80864 in Case No. 9364, provides that no electric or communication utility shall install overhead distribution facilities in proximity to any designated scenic highway (within 1,000 feet of each edge of the road right-of-way), and which would be invisible from such scenic highway if erected overhead, unless a showing is made before the Commission that the undergrounding would not be feasible or would be inconsistent with sound environmental planning. Clearly this requirement can effectively prohibit overhead distribution facilities from impairing the view from scenic highways. However, the Commission's Order does not apply to high voltage transmission lines which may be visible from a designated scenic highway.

#### b. Location of Overhead Utility Lines

Alignment of new transmission and distribution lines should be such that the lines do not harm natural scenic resources nor the visual environment.

The suggested standards are:

- \*\* Avoid sites of great scenic value, including prominent ridge lines, lakes, barren sides of mountains or hills visible from scenic highways.
- \*\* Keep alignments along the bottoms of lower slopes and valleys between hills.
- \*\* Avoid crossing hill contours at right angles and avoid steep grades which expose the right-of-way to view.
- \*\* When crossing a scenic highway, utility lines should not follow the road right-of-way for extended distances.
- \*\* In rough or very hilly country, change the alignments continuously in keeping with the scale of topographic change.
- \*\* For lower voltage sub-transmission or communication lines, undergrounding is desired when alignments parallel scenic highways.
- \*\* If a proposed overhead line route can feasibly be shifted from a scenic corridor to another area, the latter should be used.

In general, the principle involved in the location of transmission lines is the reduction of their visibility.

### 4. Earthwork

#### a. Earthwork Operations

Grading or earth-moving operations should be done with a minimum of disturbance to the natural ground and result in naturalistic or



sculptural forms. Quarries and other excavations should be restored to an attractive appearance.

b. Cover and Screening

Vegetative cover, preferably native to the area, and other screening devices should be provided to hide scars and blend with the natural landscape.

c. Waters' Edges

Edges of lakes, rivers, and creeks should be preserved in their natural state or treated so as to result in an attractive appearance. Edges of canals, reservoirs, and other water developments should be designed and treated so as to result in naturalistic or sculptural forms.

5. Plant Material

a. Preservation

Existing specimens and stands of trees and other plant materials of outstanding value should be preserved.

b. Planting

Tree planting and landscaping should be carried out based on visual impact from the route.

c. Clearing of Views

Where necessary, selective clearing should be done in order to reveal important views from the highway.

6. Development Design

Site planning, architectural, and landscape architectural design should result in an attractive appearance from the highway, and a harmonious relationship among the various elements of the development and with the existing landscape.

7. Property Maintenance

Structures on private or public properties, especially visible from the scenic highway, should be maintained in good condition and with proper attention given to a neat appearance. The grounds should be kept free from trash or other objectionable uses, or effectively screened from view.



## 8. Historical Preservation

All efforts should be made to protect and enhance all historical structures and points of interest within the corridor.

### C. RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Successful implementation of the scenic highways element is dependent on establishing a relationship with the comprehensive planning process being carried out by each of the cities and the County. Several factors unique to the region facilitate the coordination of scenic highway goals and objectives with related general plan elements. The most notable example is the close cooperation exhibited by the cities and the County for the preparation and implementation of various general plan elements in a single, unified manner. This element is of course a result of this cooperation. Thus a common basis or process for determining inter-relationships between the scenic highways elements and other general plan elements has already been established.

#### 1. Environmental Resources Management (Open Space/Conservation) Element

The environmental resources management element, more commonly known as the "ERME", is a method for consolidating State required general plan elements such as open space, conservation, seismic safety, and geological hazard elements. The preservation, protection and enhancement of the recreational, historical and scenic resources of the region is an objective common to both the ERME and the scenic highways element. The creation of a scenic system, as proposed by this element, will be carried out in a manner compatible with the policies and programs developed for protection of the resources identified in the following general plan elements:

- a. *Phase I of the Kings County Environmental Resources Management Element*, adopted in 1972.
- b. *Environmental Resources Management Element* of the Corcoran Community General Plan, adopted in 1973.
- c. *Open Space and Conservation Element* of the Hanford General Plan, adopted in 1974.
- d. *Open Space and Conservation Element* of the Lemoore General Plan, adopted in 1973.

#### 2. Transportation (Circulation) Element

The relationship of the scenic highways element to the transportation element or more specifically the KCRPA Regional Transportation Plan is self-evident. The network of roads, bicycle paths and trails identified in the regional transportation plan form the basis for the proposed scenic system. Scenic corridors are applied to those portions of the road network which traverse or provide access to the scenic resources of the region in an effort to establish a compatible relationship between those resources and the road network. The scenic highways element has been included as an integral part of the regional



transportation plan to insure an awareness of the need to consider such a relationship as the road network is further developed.

### 3. Community Design Element

The community design element is identified in State planning law, but its preparation and adoption is optional to local government. Its purpose is to identify standards and principles governing the subdivision of land and show recommended designs for community and neighborhood development and redevelopment, including sites for open space/recreational uses such as parks, playgrounds, schools and other uses. This element can enhance and protect established scenic corridors by outlining designs and controls on new development or redevelopment which may be adjacent to a corridor. It can encourage, in designated areas, planned unit developments (PUD's), setbacks, landscaping, or architectural controls which add to the aesthetic character of a scenic corridor or community entrance. The adoption of this element can provide a valuable tool for encouraging high quality development, increasing property values and adding to the community image.



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- Grunwald, Crawford and Associates: *Community General Plan*, City of Hanford, November, 1971.
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- Quad Consultants: *Open Space and Conservation Element*, City of Hanford, December, 1973.
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## A P P E N D I X







## APPENDIX 1

### Example Only

#### SC Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone

Section \_\_\_\_\_. PURPOSE AND INTENT. The SC Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone is designed for application within or adjacent to the boundaries of a Scenic Corridor on those portions of the scenic system which have been designated by the State of California, the County of Kings or the Cities of Hanford, Corcoran, or Lemoore as a Scenic Highway or Local Scenic Route. The establishment of this zone classification constitutes a recognition of the important social, recreational and economic values to be derived from protection and enhancement of the scenic qualities of the region's roadsides for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. To this end, it is intended that the SC Zone will be an overlay zone classification and that its provisions shall modify and supplement the provisions of the basic underlying zone or zones to assure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures and perpetuation of aesthetic qualities of scenic corridors. It is further intended that if any regulations specified in this Article are more restrictive than the regulations of a zone which is overlayed by the SC Zone, the regulations of this Article shall govern.

Section \_\_\_\_\_. LAND USES. In an SC Zone the following uses are permitted:

1. Any use permitted in the underlying zone, except off-site signs, subject to the same conditions and restrictions applicable in such underlying zone and to all requirements and regulations of this Article.
2. The following uses provided a special use permit is issued in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance:
  - (a) A directional panel, not to exceed 32 square feet in area, giving motorists directional information to three or more enterprises, and so located that it is not readable by a person of normal visual acuity from the right-of-way of any Scenic Highway.
  - (b) Any use allowed in the underlying zone by special use permit; provided that the Planning Commission, or in the event of an appeal, the Board of Supervisors or City Council, determines such use is consistent with the intent and purpose of the SC Zone.

Section \_\_\_\_\_. LIMITATIONS ON PERMITTED USES. Uses permitted in the SC Zone shall be subject to the following conditions:

1. Every business and industrial use shall be conducted entirely within enclosed buildings except the following:
  - (a) Agricultural uses.
  - (b) Auto laundry, drive-in restaurant, public parking area, retail nursery, sale of new or used autos, service station, similar es-



tablishments upon specified approval by the Planning Commission.

- (c) Public utility and public service structures including electric transmission and distribution substations, gas regulator stations, communications equipment buildings, public service pumping stations, and reservoirs.
2. For signs pertaining to business or industrial uses conducted on the same premises the following restrictions shall be applied in addition to all conditions and restrictions contained in the regulations governing the underlying zone:
- (a) The aggregate area of all such signs on each lot or parcel shall not exceed eighty (80) square feet, and no single sign shall exceed forty (40) square feet.
  - (b) One (1) free standing sign may be erected on each lot or parcel and shall not exceed a height of thirty-five (35) feet.
  - (c) Signs attached to buildings shall not project more than sixteen (16) inches from any wall, nor above the parapet or eaves of the building to which attached.
  - (d) No sign visible from the right of way of any Scenic Highway shall display any flashing or intermittent lights, or be animated or appear to be animated.
3. For signs in any business or industrial zone advertising the sale, lease or rental of a particular building, property or premise upon which displayed, the aggregate area shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet.

Section \_\_\_\_\_. SITE PLANS REQUIRED. Prior to the issuance of any building permit or commencement of any construction of any building or structure, except one-and two-family dwellings and structures appurtenant thereto which meet all requirements of this Article, a site plan of the proposed development shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Planning.

1. Applications for site plan approval shall be submitted to the Director of Planning and shall be accompanied by such maps, plans, drawings, and sketches as is necessary to show:
- (a) Boundaries of the property and adjoining or nearby streets;
  - (b) Location and height of all existing buildings and structures, stands of trees and specimen trees, and the proposed disposition or use thereof;
  - (c) Location, height, and proposed use of all proposed structures, including walls, fences and free-standing signs, and location and extent of individual building sites;
  - (d) Location and dimensions of ingress and egress points, interior roads and driveways, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways;
  - (e) Location and proposed treatment of important drainage-ways;
  - (f) Proposed grading and removal or placement of natural materials, including finished topography of the site; and
  - (g) Proposed landscaping plan.



2. The Director of Planning shall review applications for site plan approval and in carrying out such review, the Director shall consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria:
  - (a) All elements of the proposed development shall be consistent with the intent and all requirements of the SC Zone;
  - (b) Buildings and structures shall be so designed and located on the site as to create a generally attractive appearance and a harmonious relationship with surrounding development and the natural environment;
  - (c) Buildings, structures and plant materials shall be constructed, installed or planted so as not to unnecessarily obstruct scenic views visible from the scenic highway;
  - (d) Potentially unsightly features shall be located so as to be inconspicuous from the scenic highway or effectively screened from view by planting and/or fences, walls or grading;
  - (e) Insofar as feasible, natural topography, vegetation and scenic features of the site shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development;
  - (f) Any grading or earth-moving operation in connection with the proposed development shall be planned and executed so as to blend with the existing terrain both on and adjacent to the site, and vegetative cover shall be provided to hide scars on the land resulting from such operations.
3. Upon completion of his review, the Director of Planning shall approve, conditionally approve or disapprove a site plan.
4. No building permit shall be issued, except for a one-or-two-family dwelling or structure appurtenant thereto, for the construction of any building or structure in the SC Zone except pursuant to a site plan which has been approved by the Director of Planning.
5. The Director of Planning may waive the requirements of this Section when he finds that provisions of this Article have been or will be fulfilled by the conditions of a special use permit or by other means.
6. Upon request of the applicant, modification of an approved site plan may be made by the Director of Planning if he finds that the modification is consistent with the intent and requirements of the SC Zone.
7. Any approval of a site plan shall expire within one (1) year of such approval except where construction and/or use in reliance on such site plan has commenced prior to its expiration. If construction and/or use in reliance thereupon has not commenced within the one (1) year period, said period may be extended by the Director of Planning at any time prior to the original expiration date.





Section \_\_\_\_\_. GRADING. No grading, removal or deposit of natural materials for which a grading permit is required shall take place on any lot or parcel in the SC Zone except by a grading permit in connection with a building permit issued for construction which conforms to the provisions of this ordinance; or by a grading permit not in connection with construction that is issued with the concurrence of the Director of Planning; or if no grading permit is required, by an application to do minor grading which has been approved by the Director of Planning. The following activities are exempt from the requirements of this Section:

1. Tilling or preparation of land for agricultural purposes.
2. Minor excavation or placement of natural materials incidental to the planting of trees, shrubs and other plant material, and to the installation of minor structural features not requiring a grading permit such as fences, walls, walkways, patios and similar elements customarily accessory to a permitted use, provided such excavation or placement of materials does not alter the general overall topographical configuration of the land.







